



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy Statement

The Commission believes that national drought policy should use the resources of the federal government to support but not supplant nor interfere with state, tribal, regional, local, and individual efforts to reduce drought impacts. The guiding principles of national drought policy should be:

- ☀ Favor preparedness over insurance, insurance over relief, and incentives over regulation.
- ☀ Set research priorities based on the potential of the research results to reduce drought impacts.
- ☀ Coordinate the delivery of federal services through cooperation and collaboration with nonfederal entities.

This policy requires a shift from the current emphasis on drought relief. It means we must adopt a forward-looking stance to reduce this nation's vulnerability to the impacts of drought. Preparedness—especially drought planning, plan implementation, and proactive mitigation—must become the cornerstone of national drought policy. This basic concept was the conclusion reached by the Senate Task Force on Funding Disaster Relief in March 1995, among other entities. It was universally supported within the Commission and by the overwhelming majority of people who commented on the draft version of this report.

We recommend that Congress pass a National Drought Preparedness Act, which would establish a nonfederal/federal partnership through a National Drought Council as described in Recommendation 5.1. The primary function of the Council is to ensure that the goals of national drought policy are achieved. The goals are:

1. Incorporate planning, implementation of plans and proactive mitigation measures, risk management, resource stewardship, environ-

mental considerations, and public education as the key elements of effective national drought policy.

2. Improve collaboration among scientists and managers to enhance the effectiveness of observation networks, monitoring, prediction, information delivery, and applied research and to foster public understanding of and preparedness for drought.
3. Develop and incorporate comprehensive insurance and financial strategies into drought preparedness plans.
4. Maintain a safety net of emergency relief that emphasizes sound stewardship of natural resources and self-help.
5. Coordinate drought programs and response effectively, efficiently, and in a customer-oriented manner.

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### GOAL 1

**Incorporate planning, implementation of plans and proactive mitigation measures, risk management, resource stewardship, environmental considerations, and public education as the key elements of effective national drought policy.**

In accordance with the law that established the National Drought Policy Commission, we strongly endorse preparedness as a key element to reduce the impacts of drought on individuals, communities, and the environment. We heard convincing testimony and reviewed expert analyses that led us to conclude most levels of government and most of the private sector are not adequately prepared for drought. We believe that coordinated drought preparedness programs will lessen the need for future emergency financial and other assistance. Basic components of preparedness include long-term planning, implementation of proactive mitigation measures, risk management, resource stewardship, environmental considerations, and public education.